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ABSTRACT

This report describes the status of New York's Puerto Rican community and calls for greater corporate, philanthropic, government and community support for change. A brief introduction argues that Puerto Ricans represent a vast resource and must be assisted in gaining their rightful access to the mainstream, for the benefit of all society. The need for social welfare programming is critical, but Puerto Ricans are not satisfied with being recipients of government "handouts." A decent salary in compensation for productive work is the goal. The introduction describes the Puerto Rican community as one of the poorest in the United States. Succeeding sections offer recommendations for action in ten different areas of concern: (1) employment; (2) economic development; (3) education; (4) housing; (5) health and mental health; (6) Puerto Rican Women; (7) families and children; (8) the elderly; (9) substance and alcohol abuse; and (10) criminal justice. The report's final section presents an essay, "We the Puerto Rican People," which discusses the role that the community itself must play in decisionmaking on policies and programs. Puerto Rican human services, it is said, have traditionally worked collaboratively with politicians and educators, but now must seek increased linkages with the profit-making sectors in the Hispanic communities. Economic improvement will not only support better human services but also minimize the need for them. (KH)

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A Call to Action

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PUERTO RICANS, GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

puerto rican new yorkers

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FOREWORD

A Call to Action, the APRED Strategic Action Plan, presents the status of New York's Puerto Rican community and the need for greater corporate/philanthropic/government support for Hispanic institutions.

It documents the challenges facing the Puerto Rican human service delivery system in its efforts to improve the quality of life of Hispanic New Yorkers.

It demonstrates the need to create new relationships with the private sector, both voluntary and for-profit, and with remaining public resources, to insure the viability of Puerto Rican institutions and increase the efficiency/effectiveness of their services.

It notes that Puerto Rican human service institutions were created to assist Hispanics to gain access to desperately needed services and assistance. However, notwithstanding notable successes, many in our community remain outside the mainstream of society, forced to live in poverty and without hope.

Historically, Puerto Rican institutions gained the support of the public sector. In the absence of a financial base in the United States Mainland private sector, i.e., corporate donations, endowments, or bequests, reliance on government was essential to the survival of Puerto Rican agencies.

However, present Administration policies have substantially reduced support for our agencies and efforts to date, to decrease public sector dependence by increasing resources from private interests have met with limited success.

The Association of Puerto Rican Executive Directors, through A Call to Action, seeks to initiate a long-term commitment among public, private, and community decision-makers to help create strategic opportunities to strengthen New York's Puerto Rican community, its institutions, and thereby enhance the quality of life of all New Yorkers. It is the Association's belief that the 1980s will be the decade of the Hispanic. The degree to which the strategies proposed in A Call to Action are implemented will strongly influence whether it will be a decade of promise and opportunity or one of economic plight and misery.

New York City, the first passage of migrant and immigrant alike, can through the combined partnership of all sectors, once again assume the leadership of efforts to create a safer and better life for all New Yorkers.

APRED invites you to join with us in implementing A Call to Action to enable all sectors of our society to face the future with hope, opportunity, and "dignidad."

Dr. David Lopez, Ph.D.
Chairperson
Association of Puerto Rican
Executive Directors (APRED)

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PREFACE

The Association of Puerto Rican Executive Directors (APRED), is a consortium of the chief executive directors of the leading health and human service agencies serving New York's Puerto Rican/Hispanic communities.

APRED is a not-for-profit organization established to provide the leadership of Puerto Rican human service institutions with the collective means for articulating Puerto Rican values, interests and needs. It furnishes a formal mechanism for networking that develops activities which inform, assist, coordinate, convene and advocate for Puerto Rican and Hispanic agency stability, increased services and culturally relevant quality assistance to populations at risk.

Due to the inability or unwillingness of public sector agencies and the traditional human services network to meet the needs of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic residents during the height of migration/immigration to New York City, there was created a Third Social Service System designed by Puerto Ricans to assist community residents to obtain a better state of life.

The APRED Human Service Delivery System, therefore, arose in direct response to an assessment of unmet Puerto Rican/Hispanic community needs. Puerto Rican professionals, many of them social workers, noted huge service gaps attributable to indifference, or hostility, by numerous existing agencies to the growing Hispanic community. In addition, they found that those organizations attempting to assist Hispanics provided services which were culturally irrelevant and thus greatly underutilized.

In order to meet the broad needs of Puerto Ricans and Hispanics, and to improve the quality of life of these new New Yorkers the Puerto Rican Human Services Network was created. Pioneered by such agencies as the National Puerto Rican Forum, the Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs, Puerto Rican Family Institute and ASPIRA among others, a third system developed which for over thirty years has proven itself uniquely qualified to assist Puerto Ricans and other Hispanic New Yorkers in their quest for a better life.

Central to this system is commitment to a Puerto Rican/Hispanic value system which is the basis of advocacy and service delivery activities. This identification has proven itself crucial to the utilization of services by Hispanic consumers. Mutuality of values, language and culture enhances the trust and comprehension necessary to assist members of cur community and insures the adoption of intervention modalities appropriate to the confronting problem.

Today, the APRED Human Service Delivery System is multifaceted, consisting of professional/credentialed agencies and community based organizations providing a wide range of services to Hispanics, both locally and on a City-wide basis. The agencies in the network serve as a bridge between mainstream approaches and more local direct responses to Hispanic concerns. The APRED member institutions have indeed evolved, over the past three decades, into a critical component of societal efforts to address the human service needs of its members. Yet this system of helping agencies faces an uncertain future. Between the onslaught of Federal anti-human service policies and the indifference of numerous government officials, corporate leaders, and voluntary sector personnel, Puerto Rican institutions are confronted with diminishing resources, in an era of increasing need.

Without a firm commitment from the public and private sectors to a partnership with the Puerto Rican community and its institutions our community faces a dim future. We seek support of our rights to enter the mainstream of society to better the quality of life of all New Yorkers through implementation of A Call to Action.

Mr. Eric J. Arroyo
Executive Director
Association of Puerto Rican
Executive Directors (APRED)

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

A Call to Action, APRED's strategic action plan and policy statement, defines the Puerto Rican community's needs, identifies solutions and sets priorities. The Puerto Rican community's situation is placed in a societal context. It is, in effect, a blueprint for promoting the well-being of the Puerto Rican community, which has implications, as well, for society-at-large. APRED's intent is to foster a partnership between the private/public sectors and Puerto Rican institutions to assist in the process of economic and community development.

There are clearly underlying value premises expressed in this document, i.e., support bilingual education, champion affirmative action, promote culturally attuned human services etc.—a Puerto Rican perspective. All public policy is determined by value choices, whether explicated or not. An attempt was made throughout to arrive at a document reflecting our community's consensus around the many issues confronting New York's Puerto Ricans.

The recommendations clearly delineate APRED's positions and serve as a basis upon which determinations can be made to assist us in our self-help initiatives. The document's content also serves as an agenda for action upon which Hispanics and others can unite in exercising self-determination and in seeking equity and social justice. There are many similarities amongst the various Hispanic groups. We do not however attempt to speak for all Hispanics as there are differences related, for example to: immigration or migration status, reasons for coming to the United States, and group income levels, etc.

A Call to Action is a follow-up to the First APRED Conference of December 10, 1982. The document represents an analytical and evaluative synthesis of much material: the Conference presentations and its revised papers and tapes; membership organizational publications and social welfare literature; discussion with community representatives and leadership; and judgements of APRED board members and staff.

We wish to especially acknowledge the following individuals who presented at the first APRED conference for their contributions to the publication: Frank Bonilla, "Migration/Immigration"; I. Michael Borrero, "Employment"; Maria Gonzales Borrero, "Health"; Suleika Cabrera-Drinane, "The Elderly"; Rosa Maria Gil, "Mental Health"; Julio Martinez, "Alcohol/Substance Abuse"; Lourdes Miranda, "Puerto Rican Women"; Emelicia Mizio, "Children and Families"; Antonia Pantoja, "The Puerto Ricans"; Hector Pinero, "Housing"; Isaura Santiago, "Education"; Joseph Torres, "Criminal Justice"; and Felipe Ventegeat, "Economic Development".

We are well aware that there is a paucity of data in many areas; there is however, sufficient information to know that we are a community at great risk. Information on Puerto Ricans often becomes part of aggregate data on minorities, Hispanics and the poor rather than segregated information targeted to the Puerto Rican population. This is of great concern as it means that attempts to develop societal remedies and programs may easily lack cultural relevancy. It is important that our efforts to obtain such information be supported actively by all sectors.

This comprehensive document must be understood to represent the collective thinking of many Puerto Ricans. It is however, much, much more. It is a symbol of our resolve to bring forth a better today.

The publication was made possible through the generous support of Chemical Bank. Additional assistance was made available by the Fund for the City of New York, Gannett Foundation, and the Greater New York Fund/United Way. A special thanks is given to Ana Gonzalez who struggled through the typing of this manuscript.

Ms. Emelicia Mizio
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A Call to Action

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INTRODUCTION

This planning document is presented as a Call for Action on the part of all sectors—government, philanthropic, profit, nonprofit and community—to work together with and on behalf of the Puerto Rican people—a people in poverty and a community in crisis attributable to societal conditions. When one part of a nation has problems, the entire nation is in trouble as economic, political and community disenfranchisement nurtures social tensions. Community and economic development in the Puerto Rican community is critical for improving the quality of life of all citizens and for enabling the Puerto Rican to make a greater contribution to this society.

This call for action is, however, much more than a seeking by the Puerto Rican community of a partnership and assistance from the public/private sectors. It is an affirmation of ourselves as Puerto Ricans and a declaration of our intention to achieve a better quality of life through strategic and informed action. It is also a recognition of our responsibility to assume control over our own destiny.

The underlying premise of this document is that it is in the self-interest of society and all of its institutions to link together and work with the Puerto Rican community to secure entitlements as citizens of the United States.

Puerto Ricans number approximately 2 million on the Mainland and 3.2 million in Puerto Rico. They represent a vast resource for labor and a great potential for voting and purchasing power. Those who would be our friends have much to gain.

Puerto Ricans, if allowed, will enrich this Nation as a whole. The United States is a culturally pluralistic society which has been strengthened by its variety of heritages. The greater American society's incorporation of the Puerto Rican humanitarian value system would be a solution and response to the frequent cry for ethics in this country and for changes in its Darwinian frame of reference. Puerto Ricans must be assisted in gaining their rightful access to the mainstream for the benefit of all society.

The Societal Context

The reality of and the degree to which economic recovery is occurring is under National debate—particularly as one notes the current state of hunger in America. Puerto Ricans are not part of any recovery, but are in privity with those who are hungry and in the mainstream only of poverty.

The Puerto Rican community is one of the poorest communities in the United States, if not the poorest. Though there is a paucity of data to analyze in minute detail and with complete accuracy the Puerto Rican condition, there is no doubt that we are a community in great distress.

There is no evidence to suggest that income data on Puerto Ricans, if collected today in 1984, would portray a different and more favorable economic picture than data collected in the 1980 Census. For example, the 1980 Census shows that in 1979, median income of all families in New York City was $16,818 in comparison with $10,347 for Spanish origin families—which represents only 61.5 percent of the New York City median income. Census data also revealed that 35.7 percent of the Spanish origin population was below the Federal poverty level which is defined as $9,480 for a family of four. This is in sharp contrast with the 20 percent figure for the total New York population and the 29.5 percent for Blacks. The average Puerto Rican household had 3.08 individuals as compared with 2.49 people in New York households. To be considered as well is the fact that the Puerto Rican population is much younger in general and has more children under the age of 15 than other groups, there are, therefore, fewer wage earners—so that per capita income is even less for Puerto Ricans.

At the time of this writing, 1980 income Census data, specifically, on Puerto Ricans is not available. We note, however, that a Census report issued in September 1978 reported Puerto Rican median income to be $4,890 which was less than the Spanish origin median income of $5,024. There is a distinct possibility that the Puerto Rican median income today may remain less than the current Spanish origin one, which is very low in and of itself.

It is important to realize, in addition, that the same 1978 Census Report found that Spanish origin families maintained by a man had a higher median income, $11,800, than did those families with women as heads of household—$5,100. Thus, with the increase in broken homes and single parent households, we are continuously hearing of the feminization of poverty. This is especially noteworthy for the Puerto Rican community since in the City as a whole, 26 percent of all families have a female family householder with no spouse, but it is, 44 percent for Puerto Ricans.

The extreme depth of this poverty cannot continue to be ignored by society. For example, the South Bronx,

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heavily populated by Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics, has the dubious distinction of being the poorest Congressional district in the United States.

The nature of the crisis in New York City is shocking. The Community Council of Greater New York found that in May 1983, it cost a four person family more than $22,000 after taxes, to live at a moderate level in New York City. A single parent with a school age child would require $14,500 after taxes. Examining Census data and making adjustment to present living costs would most certainly reveal that Puerto Ricans fall no where near a moderate living standard and are indeed a community in need.

To effectively combat the poverty facing Puerto Ricans and Hispanics today, it is essential that government make a reassessment of its present pattern of funding "people" programs. Devastating are the numerous cuts in health and social programs, at a time when they are needed most. Impact studies demonstrate that the removal of social supports are forcing families on to welfare roles, leaving many without medical care and increasing the ranks of the homeless. What is most shocking is the information contained in a Congressional Budget Office report, a nonpartisan study, issued August 25, 1983 which stated that 40 percent of the cutbacks in Federal benefit programs over the last two years affected households with annual incomes below $10,000. This is societal criminality. The cutbacks included: 28 percent in child nutrition programs; 13 percent in welfare and food stamps; 17 percent in compensatory education for disadvantaged students; and 60 percent in employment and training programs. This report demonstrated conclusively that cutbacks have not served to foster in any way the obtaining of higher income that was claimed would occur and might serve to justify the reductions in benefits that occurred. In addition, these cutbacks are creating tremendous stress and tension in the Puerto Rican community.

Affirmative Action must become more than political verbiage. Affirmative Action programs to date have done little, if anything to change our poverty status. Racism remains pervasive and the opportunity structure has not opened up to Hispanics. Economy measures are maintaining hiring freezes and reduced work forces in many corporations and government agencies. Limiting vocational aspirations, even further, is the loss in monies for education and training programs. This is particularly distressful considering the projected continuing shrinkage in manufacturing jobs and blue collar occupations—the only jobs for which many Puerto Ricans are currently prepared.

This all translates into continuing higher rates of unemployment for Puerto Ricans than for other population groups. For many there are futile job searches, back and forth between the Island and New York City. The unemployment rate whether in New York City or in Puerto Rico is assessed to be between 25-30 percent for our community.

Employment program planners project that job growth in New York City will be seen in banking, finance, real estate, and business services. Puerto Ricans will require additional education and training to acquire the requisite skills to effectively compete for these positions. However, the obtaining of qualifications will be insufficient without public and private sector commitment, expressed through deeds, to the hiring of Puerto Ricans and other Hispanics.

Though all citizens are entitled to governmental supports it should be understood that the Puerto Rican is not satisfied to be the recipient of government "handouts." We wish to be enabled to purchase—through earned income—our own goods and services. A decent salary in compensation for productive work is what we seek to better the quality of our lives.

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EMPLOYMENT

The right to work must be considered a basic right for all men and women. Work is a critical source of funds for the majority of the population of the United States. It is also essential to a feeling of self worth. The ability to meet one's financial obligation to self and family is important to one's sense of competency and mastery over the environment. The nature of one's occupation also determines status and sets the limits for the degree of work satisfaction possible.

When national unemployment figures rise, Puerto Ricans are always one of the groups to be hit the hardest. The Bureau of Labor in 1982, for example, reported an official employment rate of 19.5 percent for Puerto Ricans. Though inflation is of concern to a poor community, with limited spending power, it is preferable to unemployment. Public policies directed to controlling the cost of living at the expense of populations who have no other resources upon which to draw are inefficient, unnecessary, and societally disrupting.

The Puerto Rican work force, though changing somewhat with the newer migration of professionals, is and will remain at this time, primarily blue collar and service oriented. Puerto Ricans are, more than any other group, concentrated in occupations with the lowest pay and status. The National Puerto Rican Forum found that 70.6 percent of Puerto Rican working males were employed in low income occupations as contrasted to 31.4 percent of the White males. Puerto Rican female workers were 78.2 percent in low status occupations as compared with 26.8 percent of White females. At a time when education and training funds have been severely curtailed, we continue to require extensive education and training in new technological careers. However, even when funding was more readily available it was never sufficiently targeted to Puerto Ricans and often lacked cultural relevancy. Training monies are now coming heavily under private sector control. This will probably mean increased "creaming," i.e., the training of those with the most discernible work related abilities and English fluency, leaving those perhaps in greatest need unserved. It will also lead to a lack of accountability to Hispanic consumers of employment/training services.

In New York City, in general, there is a mismatch between job requirements, white collar, and the skills of the City's unemployed, blue collar. Not qualifying for better positions adults and teenagers compete for the same low level jobs. The unemployment rate for minority teenagers is exceedingly high. The official Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment rate was 48.2 percent. What will be the chances for these teenagers to succeed in the future as adults in a job market—when they have already acquired a history of rejection, no work experience and limited, if any, marketable skills? The growing white collar employment opportunities are going to nonresidents with appropriate backgrounds. With such a trend, we can anticipate even higher unemployment rates for Puerto Ricans, especially as we are a very young population with a high rate of school dropouts. All in all this means insufficient income for Puerto Ricans to meet family needs with devastating individual, familial and societal costs. Jobs must be created for residents of New York City.

Imaginative approaches to job creation are essential and ways of putting all people to work must be explored. All segments of society are suffering the consequences of not providing meaningful employment to individuals who wish to work. Public employment projects under public and/or private auspices are important vehicles for increasing meaningful job opportunities for the Hispanic community. Decision makers must be willing to utilize public employment as a viable and important job creation strategy.

Societal conditions must cease being a major contributor to family disruption. Family breakups are a phenomenon of today's society. The lack of steady employment for the Puerto Rican male plays havoc with the Puerto Rican family structure. The Puerto Rican family has more clearly defined and dichotimized male and female roles than the wider American society. The Puerto Rican male's obligation is to work and support his family. Men are not supposed to stay at home and sexual role reversals are not culturally acceptable. As a consequence of such stress factors there are large numbers, 44 percent of Puerto Rican households headed by women and single parent families with young children as shown by the 1980 Census. This is a cause for societal alarm and action.

It is imperative that sexual discrimination in employment be eliminated, the existence of which cannot be denied. With Puerto Rican women having to become family bread winners, at marginal salaries, children are being condemned to a life of deprivation including malnutrition. Is society prepared to pay the social and economic price for its failure to assist families to help

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themselves—through societal perpetuation of barriers to educational and employment attainment opportunities for Puerto Rican men and women?

Recommendations

■ A national employment policy—securing job entitlement—must be established and operationalized. Mechanisms must be created for opening up job opportunities in both the public and private sectors. The right to employment should be considered an inalienable right.

■ Equal Employment Laws must be enforced rigorously. When employers are found in violation, sanctions must be applied with rapidity and severity.

■ Affirmative Action plans should be required of all employers. Standards for plans must be clearly specified and include the areas of recruiting, training, hiring and promoting. Diligent record keeping of implementation activities is to be required.

■ Corporate and government funding needs to be provided for the development of a computerized Puerto Rican national data bank which would identify and match Puerto Rican personnel, Puerto Rican enterprises, and job and business opportunities in all sectors. The utilization of this data bank would be required as part of the affirmative action implementation.

■ Funds must be allocated by industry and government for employment and training programs addressing the broad spectrum of needs of the Puerto Rican workforce. These programs are to be established in joint partnership with the Puerto Rican community and would include: a) career counselling to assist people in learning about and acting on their options; b) on the job training programs that tie into a career ladder; c) new skills acquisition training for high technology industries; d) basic employment skills training in prevocational preparation; e) basic literacy and English language instruction.

■ Tax write-offs should be provided for social-corporate responsibility programs that assist Puerto Ricans with all facets of their employment needs.

■ The corporate and government sectors, together, must take responsibility for subsidization of child care programs which will provide a decent standard of care for children and enable Puerto Rican women to participate in the work force, if they so desire.

■ Former Chancellor of Public Schools Alvarado's initiatives linking corporations and the public schools system should be built upon and expanded.

■ New York State/City should adopt meaningful employment policies. Mechanisms should be created for opening up job opportunities in both the public and private sectors.

■ All government agencies should be compelled, at minimum by Executive Order, to dramatically increase their Puerto Rican and Hispanic labor force in all levels of employment.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic base of the Puerto Rican community must be strengthened through business development to enable the Puerto Rican community to achieve equity in its standard of living. The few businesses that are owned by Puerto Ricans are generally of the small "mom and pop" variety, endeavors which, though essential to their owners well being, do little to expand the financial base of the community.

It is essential that the government and private sectors, profit and nonprofit, alike, make a commitment to provide business opportunities, technical assistance and financial resources to the Puerto Rican community for business ownership and expansion, thereby generating profits and job creation. A commitment simply to provide training, jobs and a career ladder, though critical, is insufficient since the means of production and capital formation will remain outside the reach of our community unless there is greater investment in our business endeavors. Puerto Ricans require the initiatives, assistance and partnership of all sectors to secure start up capital and money multipliers.

We must be enabled to secure loans and grants, to establish business enterprises without the requirement of security and matching monies, which our community entrepreneurs often do not possess. Rather, our ability to deliver a quality product, must be considered as our security/asset base and should be the main determinant for the acquisition of necessary capital.

To succeed in economic ventures, we require access to the many business concessions that are permitted to others with connections and informational sources—that we, as a community, do not presently possess. We require from all sectors of the American economy, the reaching out and dissemination of information which will make it possible for us to know, prepare and act upon opportunities—even allowing us advance information as compensatory justice. Involved is the willingness to utilize Puerto Ricans as contractors, manufacturers, purchasers and franchise buyers. It is important to enable us to be competitive through such methods as advancing and waiting for payments, financing revolving loans, and allowing purchases on consignment, etc.

Above all, there must exist a determination to assist us in our self-help economic endeavors which goes as far as providing us with technical assistance on the "how to" of making a successful proposal to one's very own organization and the "how to" of insuring an effective business performance.

The concerted efforts of the various societal sectors must be in programs specifically targeted to Puerto Rican economic development efforts. Monies from corporate social responsibility budgets in combination with foundation funds supporting community development programs have already demonstrated what can be done jointly to improve the physical and economic conditions of an area through projects in construction, rehabilitation, business capitalization, commercial and industrial revitalization. The fact that the Puerto Rican community is poorer and owns fewer businesses than other Hispanic and minority communities reflects the fact that to truly assist us efforts must be specifically directed to our community. The many problems of the Puerto Rican community show that our needs cannot be met when subsumed under Hispanic or minority concerns. This must be recognized if we are to be aided in our self-help efforts.

Recommendations

- Funds should be provided by New York State/City leveraged with private sector monies, for the creation of a Puerto Rican/Hispanic Industrial Development Foundation. This Foundation would serve as a clearinghouse of industrial information, research, networking and financial development advocacy. The government and corporate sectors must commit themselves to the responsible dissemination of information useful to the ongoing work of this foundation.

- A major task for joint sector action of the Puerto Rican community is the development of a Master Economic Development Plan which includes implementation strategies.

- Government and corporations should actively assist in the creation and fostering of Puerto Rican/Hispanic businesses through grants, tax abatements, targeted purchasing practices and nontraditional loans, which would be based on ability to deliver rather than on assets or security.

- Campaigns should be developed to encourage Puerto Ricans/Hispanics to purchase goods and services from Puerto Ricans/Hispanics, where available, and also to buy only from non-Hispanic businesses with strong equal employment opportunity programs.

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- The public and private sectors should actively pursue policies to increase purchases of goods and services from Puerto Rican/Hispanic businesses.

- Technical assistance should be a priority of Government and corporations to Puerto Rican/Hispanic firms at all levels of business development or operations.

- It is important to monitor and lobby for legislation which would enable us to develop economic institutions with financial supports.

- The government and corporate sectors should demonstrate further their commitment to affirmative action by utilization of the computerized Puerto Rican National Data Bank upon its creation and their subsequent actions in providing business to Puerto Rican concerns.

- Government should permit tax abatements for corporations to assist in Puerto Rican business development.

- Voter registration drives must be ongoing as they are critical for impacting politically and securing of economic concessions.

- The nonprofit sector must explore and develop profit making enterprises which do not, however, jeopardize the organizational tax exempt status.

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EDUCATION

The right to a quality education must be assured all of America's children—no matter what their heritage. It is their entitlement and a societal obligation to help each child fulfill his/her potential. Neither can the United States in the race for technological superiority afford the destruction of any of its childrens' future. It is not possible to predict from which ethnic or class background the next Albert Einstein or Madame Curie will emerge. After attaining compulsory education, a meaningful education must not be the province of only the affluent.

All societal sectors must work together to develop and implement multiple strategies which will insure a quality educational system in this country. The educational system is currently under attack for its failure to educate America's student body and for rendering the United States lacking in the competition for technological superiority. The National Commission on Excellence in Education's report, of May 1983, pronounced the teaching quality in public schools as woefully inadequate and described educational performance as mediocre.

It is essential that a complete assessment be made of the reasons for the failure to educate that go beyond the incompetence of educators. There are model programs which can be identified and replicated with necessary adaptations for regional and cultural variations. There are educational solutions, but apparently no societal resolution to assure a quality education to all.

The educational system is perceived by many as suffering from a purposeful indifference and planned negligence stemming from the stratification of classes in American society and a basically closed opportunity structure which no longer needs an educated populace. The Puerto Rican community is not part of the elite and powerful. Its children need to attend public schools, as parents cannot afford to give them a private school education other than struggling to provide a parochial one. Private school enrollment for Hispanics is not an alternative, with only 12 percent of Hispanics enrolled in contrast to 40 percent for Whites.

Society must hold itself accountable for the low level of achievement of Puerto Rican children despite the value placed on education in Puerto Rican culture.

There is no question that discrimination is a factor in the poor performance in schools and heavy dropout rates, "push out," of Puerto Rican youngsters. Puerto Rican students find themselves in schools with obsolescent facilities and limited equipment, which is of special significance in an age of computerized instruction. Few teachers with experience and seniority elect to teach in "Barrio" schools so that the caliber of instruction varies by geographical area and the poor undoubtedly receive less quality teaching. Puerto Rican children are often tracked into class programs below their potential with the assumption made of reduced capabilities. Their learning needs are not responded to, which not only cheats them out of learning opportunities but frustrates them and lessens their motivation for learning. Thus, the Puerto Rican child is maneuvered into fulfilling the prophesy of the uneducable. The child is easily transformed into a "pushout"—learning early that his/her position is clearly below that of the White. This consciousness of societal rejection is in violent opposition to the internal sense of "respeto and dignidad," which are central Puerto Rican values. School aspirations decrease and avenues for recognition are sought elsewhere and may be found in antisocial activities.

Action must be taken to counteract the American Council on Education's findings that the dropout rate for Hispanics in the United States in 1981 was 36 percent compared to 16 percent for Whites and 19 percent for Blacks and which showed 10 percent of Hispanics to be functionally illiterate. The New York City situation is far worse with Hispanics, 31 percent of the total New York City student body, displaying in the 9th through 12th grade an 80 percent dropout rate—compared to 72 percent for Blacks and 50 percent for Whites. This dropout rate is of crisis proportions, the magnitude of which is most apparent when noting the 1980 unemployment rate for high school dropouts (ages 16-21)—73 percent.

Monitoring must assure that teachers subscribing to deficit theories of education be prevented from working in the school system. It is unconscionable for children to be seen as having limited abilities for learning—attributable to inherent community group characteristics. Outcomes are seen as causative in a "blaming the victim" philosophy. The school's perception of the Puerto Rican child as deficient is damaging to self esteem and healthy emotional development and poses negative consequences eventually for society.

It is imperative that all societal sectors support a policy fostering cultural pluralism recognizing its beauty and value. There must be an appreciation that melting pot ideology leads to the "stripping" of the Puerto Rican child. Stripping is the attempt to remove all vestiges of

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identification, substituting an "acceptable American" version of what a child should be. The speaking of Spanish in any form is forbidden either covertly or overtly. The practice even goes so far as "Americanizing" a child's name. It is important to recognize that a name involves the core of self. Its symbolism is understood and reflected in the naming process which is elaborated on in many a religious ceremony. The child must be enabled to maintain personal integrity and the strength derived from ethnic roots.

Bilingual education is the prerogative of all Hispanic children and additional programs must be created and others strengthened. They are not to be labeled as second class programs and are to be an integral part of the total school's operations. The numbers of Hispanic children make it a feasible option and a worthwhile societal investment. We are not speaking of bilingual education in terms of a philosophy of cultural separatism or cultural assimilation but rather in terms of cultural pluralism. The purpose of bilingual education must be to prepare a student from a different language and culture with the tools required to gain entry into mainstream society—without being required to relinquish the language and values of the home and ethnic community.

It is essential that all societal sectors champion a multilingual society based on a comprehension of the many functions of language. Language is closely tied to identity and gives order to thought processes and shapes reality. There is preliminary evidence showing that a child's non-English home language does not impede learning English or other school subjects.

The language of the home, "mother tongue," is the best instrument for learning. The child can easily learn English by crediting and using the tool of his/her knowledge of Spanish. English will be reinforced throughout life, while Spanish can easily be lost if pressure is placed to relinquish heritage. The child who comes to school speaking only Spanish should not be perceived as possessing a deficit but should be viewed instead as having an asset. Without losing Spanish the child will learn English and a mark of an educated person is the ability to communicate in more than one language. Europeans, in contrast to Americans, are generally, at minimum, bilingual. It should also be recognized that Spanish will be useful in future employment and a resource to an employer in a marketplace which is increasingly becoming Hispanic. The importance of foreign language acquisition was underscored by the National Commission on Excellence in Education and is again to be required of New York City academic high school graduates.

There are many children today with learning problems which could have been avoided had there been quality bilingual, bicultural programs. Consequently remediation programs, particularly in English reading and mathematics, remain critical. Many of our children end up neither speaking English nor Spanish. "Spanglish" is unacceptable for formal communication. There are presently programs that are designed for limited English proficiency students, to which many students through discriminatory ploys and manipulations, have been denied access. Court action has been taken by the Puerto Rican community to protect the educational rights of children through the advocacy efforts of such groups as ASPIRA and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense & Education Fund. It will be in the self-interest of the government and corporate sectors to support the enforcement and further creation of laws designed to create equity in education. Their future labor pool will rest on its success.

A network of social and health supports should be available to enhance a child's learning. It is not possible to learn in any language if a child is hungry or sick. The school is central not only to the promotion of learning but of health as well. Breakfast and lunch programs throughout the whole year are important for insuring proper nourishment. At minimum, the school should provide medical checkups and make and follow-up on all referrals, health or otherwise, that are necessary to foster a child's growth. If there are home problems interfering with a child's learning, counselling to child and family should be provided, on school grounds preferably since it is a nonstigmatized setting.

Children who do not have suitable clothing to wear, often will not attend classes. Schools could help by running clothing drives. Parents with low income find it difficult to feed and clothe children in the way that they would wish. Many parents also must work and leave children alone. After school programs offering recreation and tutoring would provide "latch key" and other children with a supervised setting, offering them both a valuable social and learning opportunity.

Children who are not enabled to become good students may become the school dropouts. They will be restricted in the development of their abilities and skills and unable to compete successfully as adults in the world of work, which necessitates technical sophistication at a level not required in the past. The individual, family, and society will pay a price for creating a work force that cannot produce competitively in the world marketplace. Society must also weigh the fact that individuals who cannot achieve in socially acceptable ways may seek an opportunity structure elsewhere. For example, a study of prison inmates showed that 80 percent of the Puerto

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Ricans had not completed high school.

School programs for the Puerto Rican child especially must be infused with the world of work as students need to see the relationship of their learning to their future jobs. At present this connection has too little meaning. Their perception of employment possibilities are limited by their perception of their families' occupations. Their motivation to succeed will be increased only upon seeing a Puerto Rican presence at all levels of government, business and professions. Puerto Rican role models must be available to place a better life in the context of possibility and reality.

An immediate response is, however, required for our children from all sectors that call for far more than a Puerto Rican job presence, which will take time to achieve in the numbers necessary. Programs that link a corporation with a particular school and others that allow corporate personnel time to serve as mentors for children are very essential. Corporate personnel can also donate consulting services. Companies are in the best position to teach youngsters work habits and prepare them for full-time steady employment. They also can make possible the youths earning of money, a critical need, in jobs that require using themselves productively.

The best investment that a nation can make is in its children. A student who has no prospects for continuing an education has no inspiration for learning. It is of grave concern that: the numbers of Hispanics going on to higher education has declined between 1975 and 1980; Hispanics only received 2.3 percent of the bachelor degrees awarded in 1980; and minority participation in higher education declined at all levels in the 80's, losing the dramatic improvements of the 60's and 70's. Despite these factors, there is some hope in that minorities in precollege test scores in the last two years have improved significantly.

The Puerto Rican student needs to have obtainable loans, grants and fellowships. The achieving Puerto Rican child will not only develop technical skills but also will have facility in Spanish and knowledge of the Hispanic culture. Hispanic purchasing power is increasing. Bilingual, bicultural employees will have the capacity for creation of informed marketing strategies, to this very population, and can become an important source for profit. It is, therefore, in the self-interest of society to promote learning opportunities for Hispanics.

Recommendations

- A quality public education, including college, must be supported as a right of all America's children and funds must be provided for the operationalization of this right. This is necessary for the propagation of democracy.
- The government and corporate sectors must demonstrate a commitment to the enforcement and promulgation of laws which promote educational equity.
- The public/private sectors should provide monies for educational model demonstration programs and for assessment research to determine replication value and suitability for ongoing government funding.
- Government and corporate sectors must provide monies for after school hours programming for remediation and recreation including demonstration projects.
- Loans, scholarships and grants must be provided by the government, leveraged with private sector funds, to permit students to pursue higher education of their choice and for creation of a skilled bilingual, bicultural teaching cadre.
- Government should direct monies into bilingual, bicultural education, promoting the utilization of Spanish which serves to: facilitate the learning of English and other subject areas; enhance the self-image of the Hispanic child; and provide ultimately an educated citizenry.
- Monies should be directed into research to determine differences in language acquisition as related to learning a "mother tongue," second language and foreign language in order to more effectively promote language fluency in general. The development specifically of an educated work force—bilingual in Spanish and English and knowledgeable of Hispanic culture—would be an asset to corporations wishing to address the preferences of Hispanic consumers, a group with increasing numbers and purchasing power.
- The corporate sector should work cooperatively with schools to develop work study programs and provide consulting services for improvement of school operations and teaching.
- Government monies must be provided for noneducational types of supports necessary to maximize the responsiveness of children to learning. Food programs, and health and mental health services are essential.

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HOUSING

All people are entitled to shelter—affordable, decent, clean and safe with sufficient space for permitting of some privacy.

It is the shame of this City that we find more and more people homeless, wandering the streets—a number of whom are mentally ill. Others are living in welfare hotels with the City paying exhorbitant rates for frightful accommodations, while maintaining unrealistically low housing allowances. There is a lack of adequate housing for low and moderate income persons in New York City.

There are no reliable statistics to inform of the number of Puerto Rican/Hispanics who wander homeless, the unsheltered. A report, *The Conditions and Needs of the Homeless*, issued September 1984 by the New York State Department of Social Services, informs that families in shelters are twice as likely to be Hispanics as compared to Whites. We also know that under the impact of Urban Renewal through gentrification Puerto Ricans have found themselves displaced from former Puerto Rican areas. They have been forced to move into substandard housing and have suffered throughout from discrimination and landlord exploitation.

Public policies must insure the provision of housing to maintain a family together; public policy must not serve to condone the foster care placement of children directly attributable to lack of housing. There are Hispanic families who are known to be without apartments and are living in welfare hotels—which despite the deplorable condition of many of these dwellings, do maintain a family together. It is shocking to realize that a reason for placement of a Hispanic child is often a lack of housing for the family. This has been documented and can be testified to by Puerto Rican child welfare workers. A newspaper article in the Daily News on October 5th, 1983, quotes New York City officials as seeking permission to evict certain families from welfare hotels and perceiving foster care as a legitimate option for these children. The poor are becoming political hostages in a battle between the State and City on the issue of housing for the poor. The Hispanic community cannot afford the continuation of these squabbles. It is unconscionable to adjudge child placement a viable option for families in need of habitable housing.

The aforementioned New York State Department of Social Services Report indicates an expectation of a lower than 2 percent vacancy rate in low rent apartments when a normal efficient housing market requires a 5 percent vacancy rate. In light of the dire housing emergency existing in New York City and the need for immediate rehabilitation of apartments, the City's ability since August 1st, 1983, to provide approximately 16 rehabilitated apartments a month to families will not, in any way, suffice to fill the gap. It is important also to be aware of the many families with apartments but living in overcrowded housing. 1980 Census figures on housing in New York City reveal Puerto Ricans living under conditions that are worse than any other group. By the Federal standard for measuring overcrowded housing Puerto Rican households are almost twice as crowded as all households in New York City.

Society must appreciate that the lack of adequate housing for Puerto Ricans/Hispanics has ramifications that go far beyond what it does to an individual and family. Stabilized communities are critical to the well-being of the City as a whole. A rooted community can exercise social control over its members, especially over its youth. This tends to lessen crime and other antisocial behavior.

Society must provide resources for attaining home ownership which is important to the stabilization and economic betterment of any community. A community without a sense of neighborhood becomes crime infested as it loses restraints over its residents. It is unfortunate that the Puerto Rican community has a disproportionate low number of home owners. We will require assistance in making the dream of "mi casa" a reality.

Factors contributing to political impotency must be obliterated and political participation encouraged. A prerequisite for community strength is a solidly based community in an area. "A place to hang one's hat," is necessary before it can be tossed into the ring. Only as a group fights for and is permitted to secure its rightful place in society will urban plight become urban revitalization.

It is time for creative approaches to the housing crisis that exists for more than the Puerto Rican community. It is even involving more and more of all of New York City's youth who are increasing the ranks of the homeless. It is true that construction costs are high so that, for profit, preference is given to the building of luxury dwellings. Unions fighting, understandably, to protect their gains and "turf" are opposed to public works type projects which could provide jobs for many. A balance must be sought between protecting workers' rights,

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providing jobs and increasing housing. Housing cannot be subject to the vagaries of the market economy which has left the poor and even middle class without housing.

All sectors will have to assume responsibility for a massive housing construction/rehabilitation endeavor which calls for the cooperative efforts of all in joint activities. Government must provide public housing and various tax incentives that would make it viable to build/rehabilitate low and moderate income housing in designated minority communities. A critical component of such efforts must be the involvement of Puerto Ricans/Hispanics at all levels of such efforts.

The time for a demonstrated commitment of all sectors is now—working together to allow everyone a place to live.

Recommendations

- All sector Housing Task Forces should be convened by the Governor/Mayor to develop low and moderate income plans for New York State/City to explore collaborative strategies for joint sector initiatives.

- Support must come from all sectors for passage of community revitalization legislation.

- Government supports must be provided for enabling Puerto Ricans to own property, these would include: low interest loans and mortgages, small down payments, and protective mortgage insurance programs.

- Government must embark on a massive housing construction and rehabilitation program either through direct building or contracting with the private sector, whichever is most economical and feasible, just as long as there is a substantial increase in the number of available housing dwellings.

- The City must secure increased funding to expedite rehabilitation of City owned properties to make them into habitable dwellings.

- The housing allowance for welfare recipients must be in keeping with the market value of rentals.

- The City in providing temporary housing accommodations must work with the State to set and enforce stringent occupancy standards for private hotels or/and run its own hotels for homeless families.

- All temporary housing shelters must have strong linkages with human service agencies to provide essential supports for families that must be recognized to be in crisis.

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HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

Quality health care must be the right of all people. It is distressful that in New York there are essentially two separate Health Care Systems, with minorities and the poor located in areas designated by City and State officials as "underserviced" and without quality health services. While federally funded programs initiated in the 1960's had been narrowing the gap in health status between minorities, poor and the affluent, recent cutbacks have widened the inequities in access to quality medical care.

Health care itself, never mind quality care, must not be allowed to become the impossible dream. It seems that we are arriving at the time when an individual may not be permitted any medical attention at all. The Reagan administration is striving to alter further the Medicaid Program. It would limit eligibility even more and reduce benefits for thousands of children and elderly people with high medical expenses. The New York Times, October 9th, 1983, points to the fact that these proposed changes would be applicable to people who already have incomes so low that these cuts would force them to face impoverishment. They will be added to the ranks of the many others that have already faced the loss of Medicaid.

Restoration of monies must be made to the health care system. The municipal hospital system will not be able to handle the escalating drain on its already depleted resources attributable to financial cuts in program, increased usage and the ever expanding cost of sophisticated medical technology. Its hospitals are reporting a growing number of visits to the outpatient department clinics. People are unable to pay the increased cost of services in voluntary hospitals which have had to charge higher fees, due in part, to the hospitals' loss of government monies.

Additionally, as a result of loss of insurance coverage, many people can no longer meet the expense of services in voluntary hospitals and are creating even larger patient loads for municipal hospitals. Insurance coverage must not be lost upon unemployment.

A comprehensive study, *Puerto Ricans and Health: Findings from New York City*, conducted at Fordham University confirmed that Puerto Ricans have always had to rely on municipal hospitals and have not had the benefits of the superior medical care available elsewhere. There is a shortage of private physicians in poverty areas who tend, as well, to be less qualified and some even do not possess hospital privileges. Puerto Ricans without any options for medical attention use municipal outpatient clinics but not with the frequency needed because of the many barriers to services and their feelings of depersonalization while in attendance. They tend instead to make greater use of the emergency room and utilize it in an episodic crisis oriented fashion. It is always available and there is generally little financial screening. In addition, they have very little money with which to pay private doctor bills. Apart from any reference to quality, the continuity and preventive aspects of medical practice are lost with such usage. Responsibility must be taken by health providers for outreach to Puerto Rican patients to insure their appropriate use of and return for services. Without attention to a community's health profile or cultural factors, continuity and preventive care will remain for the Puerto Rican as it is today—strictly a theoretical concept rather than a practice reality.

It is imperative that the health services be held accountable for programming addressing the health profile(s) and being culturally responsive to the ethnic community(ies) within its service area. We are especially concerned that health services respond to our children's specific health needs.

Statistics demonstrate that children from low income, minority, and immigrant/migrant families suffer a higher incidence of health problems than other groups. Their growth needs must be monitored and responded to in appropriate health and nutrition programs, targeted to this population. The deficits of Puerto Rican children begin early—even before birth. There has been reported to be a higher frequency of low birth weight—accounting for most infant deaths among Hispanic children and relating to factors adversely affecting maternal condition. Puerto Rican children must not be born with deficits. Programs such as the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) are crucial. There are increasing numbers of teenage parents among minority children, which creates more young children at risk. In response, special programming efforts are required and Effective Parenting Programs are critical, programs for teens, however, must start much earlier with the dissemination of information on human sexuality, contraception and pregnancy counselling. These activities do not in any way address the underlying social causation that forces children to become adults prematurely and perpetuates a societal underclass.

Neighborhood health centers must be recognized by

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the traditional health services as partners and as an essential link in a continuum of care. If integrated successfully into the life of the community they will serve as advocates and work with the community to alter the conditions adversely affecting the health, broadly defined, of its residents. Neighborhood health centers are in a position to best know their consumers of service and to interpret their needs to the health system. With representative community board participation and bilingual, bicultural personnel they truly can be culturally responsive.

The total Health Care System must expand its cadre of trained bilingual, bicultural personnel to establish a Hispanic presence in Hispanic service areas. This is critical in order to obtain essential knowledge and mitigate against the feelings of dehumanization caused by an impersonal delivery system, which is in total contrast to the Hispanic's value system with its emphasis on "personalismo," a primarily relationship orientation in all human dealings. The health system must become curative rather than destructive. Health care personnel must be informed about an ethnic group's belief system with reference to health and the human body. Ethnic groups have their own ideas on disease, causation, symptoms and diagnosis. Many Hispanics believe in hot and cold theories on the nature of illness and have related cures. Folk medicine and spiritualists cannot be ignored. It is essential that the system's personnel be competent at determining the fit between the patient's and doctor's health models for determining areas of potential conflict in clinical management. Clinical management is difficult enough as medical terminology is not the language of social discourse. When patients have a limited command of English it is even harder to follow medical instructions of any kind. There must be responsibility taken by the health care providers for the patient's understanding instructions, and for anticipating its cultural meaning.

Mental health practitioners, especially, must understand their patient's culture particularly as it pertains to a philosophy of life and world view upon which successful diagnosis and treatment rests. Too many Puerto Ricans are misdiagnosed as psychotic and retarded because of the practitioners lack of such knowledge. Clinician and patient must be able to communicate. The understanding of words by themselves is simply not enough. The clinician must understand that there is a great difference between a translation (translating words literally) and an interpretation which is able to place language in a cultural context for himself/herself and patient. Culturally relevant psychiatric treatment is of special importance as it is reported that epidemiological studies consistently show higher rates of mental illness for Puerto Ricans than other ethnic groups or total population. Indicative of psychiatric difficulties, as well, are the high rate of substance abuse and violence in the Puerto Rican population. There is a need for documentation and research on our health needs. This must be action research which assesses innovative responsible interventions. The most powerful public health intervention would be the elimination of poverty and racism in this society.

A reorganization of New York City's Health Care System is imperative. New York State Health Commissioner Dr. David Axelrod's description of the City's hospital system as fragmented and duplicative is no doubt true. Puerto Ricans have not, however, experienced duplication of services but rather too often no services at all. We support planning that attempts to maximize resource utilization. The proposal of the Health System Agency to have large medical centers assume increasing responsibility for smaller hospitals seem realistic so long as communities retain control over their facilities. Community involvement for cultural relevancy is imperative. Linkages are desirable that place preventive health and routine care at the community level in neighborhood health centers with the technical support and easy referral access of patients to high technology hospitals for complex situations. The elimination of duplication and fragmentation is only a beginning point. A large financial investment in health care is still an essential requirement.

A society cannot afford its citizens to become infirmed and disabled through its neglect and differential systems of care for poor and rich. A productive and creative society requires a healthy citizenry. Are we to continue to do less in this area than European nations who do not pretend to reach our level of affluence? As a society we may cringe at the term socialized medicine but this does not absolve our nation from seeking to improve the type and availability of care through whatever other means is compatible with our democratic way of life!

Recommendations

- Formalized linkages must be strengthened between municipal and voluntary hospitals and neighborhood health centers. These linkages are for planning, organization and delivery of service. Improvement, coordination, elimination of duplication and service gaps as well as easy patient access to services is critical.

- Government's cutting of health funding must cease, and at minimum, cuts already made in health services for the poor and near poor must be restored with a timetable for expansion of funding.

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- A mechanism must be developed for the continuation of health insurance coverage for the newly unemployed.
- Universal medical coverage must become an actualized goal in the 1980's.
- Public/private sector monies should be provided to assist the health service professional schools and facilities to provide ongoing cultural responsiveness training to students and personnel.
- Professional schools, foundations, corporations and government must provide monies, or low interest loans, grants, stipends, and internships for the education and training of bilingual, bicultural personnel for positions at all levels in the health services.
- Affirmative action must be demonstrated by health care facilities for continuing access to government funding.

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PUERTO RICAN WOMEN

Puerto Rican/Hispanic women—a most vulnerable population—must be guaranteed equal rights, access, and protection under the law. Too often the battle for Puerto Rican/Hispanic women is not for advancement but for survival.

Society must provide the Puerto Rican/Hispanic woman with income, employment opportunities, and programmatic supports which will enable her to function effectively. The Puerto Rican woman has tremendous responsibilities. She cannot cope effectively if adherence to traditional Puerto Rican family roles and values are in immediate conflict with the demands of an "Anglo-Saxon" stateside environment. She, often, must act independently and carry the same burdens as her Puerto Rican male counterpart.

The Puerto Rican woman, whether as head of household or wife, has to manage with the most meager of resources. As a mother she has to contend with children making demands based upon mass media's hard sell. As a Puerto Rican single parent, of which there are a disproportionate number, needing to work she commands little by way of salary. For the most part she receives minimum wages. She cannot go to work with her mind at ease. She has difficulty making child care arrangements and has little in societal assistance. Too often, she is forced to leave children in the care of siblings who may need care themselves. There are few resources on which she can count for help. She never knows when the next funding cutbacks will occur or in what areas. Will she and her children remain eligible for Medicaid? Will there be food stamps tomorrow or school lunches? Will there be room for her child in the camp, special class or after school programs? With all of these difficulties she can only wonder if there is any point to working.

The low labor force participation rate of Puerto Rican women must be acknowledged to be of great societal concern. Puerto Rican women, have the lowest labor force participation of any ethnic/racial group. According to March, 1979 census figures, only 36.4 percent of Puerto Rican women participated in the labor force. Of them, 38.4 percent were in clerical and related jobs and 46.8 percent were operatives. Their median income was $4,179, which is less than the yearly minimum wage of around $7,200. These figures reflect devastating circumstances when we recall the 44 percent single parent households headed by Puerto Rican women.

It is estimated that nationally, 70 to 80 percent of female headed nonwhite families live in poverty. Almost 30 percent of Puerto Rican females are separated, widowed or divorced. Also, Puerto Rican female family householders are, on the average, younger than all New York City female family householders by 6.2 years. Without society's easing of the burdens faced by Puerto Rican women it will be a herculean task for her to better her life and care for those in her charge. It is too much to expect that a woman who is struggling with survival issues give full emotional sustenance to her family. The high incidence of drug abuse, crime and teenage pregnancy should come as no surprise. The wonder is that the majority, despite their circumstances, manage to hold their families together and survive.

What is also remarkable are the numbers of young Puerto Rican girls who, despite the odds, are securing an education; they and our young men represent hope for our future. The educational achievement of our young women is rising with 23.1 percent of the 20 to 24 year olds studying 1 to 3 years in college and 6.5 percent completing 4 years or more. The young Puerto Rican woman is showing her ability to achieve despite the obstacles placed in her way.

No matter how poor and how difficult it is for many Hispanic mothers, an overwhelming number still value education for their children and they approve of their daughters educational goals. There are, nevertheless, too many youngsters who are not achieving and schools must assume responsibility for preventing a pattern of failure with their students.

Supplementations to parenting functions must not be perceived as a substitute for direct assistance to a parent who also has individual needs. Though Puerto Rican women are beginning to develop self-help groups and professional networks these are insufficient as the gravity of the situation calls for much more than mutual aid endeavors.

There must be programs developed that are targeted to the educational and training needs of Puerto Rican women. Also, apprenticeships where women can learn on the job are essential. Women will, in addition, require assistance with self-image and assertiveness to counteract the societal depreciation and the traditional values of the submissive role of Puerto Rican women. Puerto Rican men have a responsibility to assist women to break out of a pattern of subservience. It will not be enough, however, to provide these opportunities if there

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is no way for women to avail themselves of them. Assistance to Puerto Rican women must include enabling supports and not be a societal farce. The Puerto Rican woman must be enabled to break out of poverty—today not tomorrow.

Recommendations

- Government and corporate funds must go into provision of day-care services to enable women to participate in the labor force and in educational and training programs.

- Colleges/Universities should provide staffing for development of cooperative student day-care programs so that students can attend classes and do library work while their children are receiving proper care.

- Foundations and corporations, through their social responsibility programs, must provide funding for development and support of innovative womens' mutual assistance groups for their provision of peer group encouragement, self-esteem enhancement, role modeling, skill development and networking.

- Day-care programs should be on site whenever possible, so that mother and child will have access to each other.

- All sectors must work together to provide monies for training and educational programs with income supports enabling program participation. These must be specifically targeted to the educational and training needs of Puerto Rican/Hispanic women. Work preparation, skill development and content knowledge is insufficient; the climate for learning with a discriminated population must be set and be culturally relevant.

- Affirmative action programs must encompass corrective measures directed toward the Puerto Rican/Hispanic female.

- Corporations must gear themselves for flex-time operations which will allow for greater ease of child care arrangements and thereby, encourage work force participation.

- Equal Employment Laws must be enforced rigorously. When employers are found in violation, sanctions must be applied with rapidity and severity.

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FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Healthy families are the sina qua non of a health society. They are critical to the preservation of our societal structure and its effective functioning. Families cannot exist in isolation and maintain their health without societal supports. There is a reciprocity between society and its members that must be acknowledged.

To understand a family and its operations it must be studied in transaction with its environment. This is the perspective from which to examine the Puerto Rican family. The family is an extremely vulnerable institution affected by and responsive to societal conditions. The family must be provided with the resources to manage its changing tasks in a society which appears ever in flux. The degree of vulnerability relates closely to its socioeconomic status. The effects of poverty in terms of physical and mental malaise and feelings of hopelessness have been well documented. We know the Puerto Rican family to be a family in jeopardy. Society, in turn, jeopardizes itself when it does not meet the needs of its citizenry.

The preservation and perpetuation of a distinct ethnic community and its families must be perceived as an inalienable perogative in a pluralistic society and has broad political, economic, social, and emotional ramifications. All families, no matter what their heritage, are entitled to life sustaining conditions which enable them to assume their functional responsibilities which, in brief, include: physical care, reproduction, socialization, maintenance of order, morale, motivation building and production. Perhaps the most important responsibility is in relation to its children. The manner in which the Hispanic family is enabled to carry forth its tasks of caring and socialization will serve to determine the continuity of the Puerto Rican community as an identifiable entity—its entitlement.

Every child has a right to be part of his/her biological family or, at minimum, when this is not possible, the right to be an integral part of an adoptive family of the same heritage. A positive identification with one's ethnic background is critical to a child's psychological development. A child requires the emotional sustenance that is derived from intimacy with an adult and from being part of a soundly operating and protective family unit. Too many of our children are separated inappropriately from biological parents when the adequate provision of social supports would have permitted the child to remain at home. That children seek and need their roots is incontrovertible. Daily newspaper stories of natural family members reuniting testify to the societal awareness of their importance. Our children, when separated from their blood kin and placed in foster homes and institutions, are less likely to return home or to be adopted than White children. In fact, those who do finally obtain a permanent home remained longer in the foster care system than White children.

In New York, officials have an obligation to take note and explain the fact that in each area of the State there is a sharp disparity between the racial composition of the region and the numbers of children in foster care. The racial distribution of the child population in this State has been increasing and is almost one-third minority. According to a June 1982 New York State Department of Social Services report on foster care trends, there are 770,000 Hispanic children in New York State which is 13 percent of New York's children. In New York City the percentage of minority children increases to 65 percent but 85 percent of the children in foster care are minority, 22 percent of which are Hispanic. This pattern persists throughout the State. Causal explanations for the greater numbers of minority children in foster care have to give weight to the median income of the various groups. The great disparity in median income between Whites and Minorities is destroying families and society is culpable. This has special implications for the Puerto Rican community in that they have even the lowest income of all the Hispanic groups. This is of great concern to the Puerto Rican community considering the youth of our population. 26.3 percent of Puerto Rican families have children under 17 years old in comparison to 19.4 percent for the City.

Societal supports are required as stress mediators to prevent family deterioration. Poverty and racism serve to diminish coping abilities, making it difficult to handle the many other straining forces which include, for the Puerto Rican: new language acquisition which calls for a restructuring of reality; bureaucratization and an impersonal society in contrast to the primary relationships of Puerto Rican society; differences in life's pace and dealing with the variations of a pluralistic society as opposed to a homogeneous one—all of which have a quantitative and qualitative impact.

Society cannot afford the social cost of family breakdown, of which foster care is reflective. The separation has deleterious effects for both parents and child; at the

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very least, it is bound to damage the child's self-esteem and capacity for bonding attachment, relatedness and intimacy. Upon separation from families the inability to grieve and rebond will often cause mental illness or delinquency. Puerto Ricans have a high rate of mental illness. Also disturbing is the high rate of Hispanic crime. Douglas Gurak's findings in a study of convicts in a 5 state area must give everyone pause. A large proportion of convicts had experienced as children frequent changes in family placements and a large number had been in foster care and orphanages. Society can spend its funds in a more cost effective manner. Carol Bellamy, at the Long Island Committe of Adoptive Parents Conference on November 20, 1983, reported that the average foster care placement is of 4 years duration and costs $56,000. It is much cheaper to provide familial supports than to pay the expenses of foster care, medical, psychiatric treatment, or jails.

The Hispanic family—a family under siege—can be expected to have problems creating the stability and object constancy required to produce the nurturing environment conducive to a child's optimum development. The findings from an examination of a sample of all foster children in care as of July 1979, revealed the nature of parental problems accounting for Hispanic children in placement, 3.6 percent related to parental surrendering or deaths. The most common reason, however, for placement in 34 percent of the Hispanic sample was "parent-coping," as tied into inadequate housing or finances, parental or sibling conflict or a stated inability to handle current problems. This does not speak to severe pathology but rather talks to the need for societal support in concrete and emotional areas. It is deplorable that children should be removed from their homes under such circumstances and become high risk victims for mental illness and lives of crime.

Society must work to eliminate placement under such conditions which appears expressive of an underlying punitive philosophy, especially as related to Minorities. We need explained why society is not willing to supply families of origin with supplementary income subsidies while spending huge sums in foster care and institutionalization. We also need answers to the reasons for the low rate of return to families of our children in care in comparison with Whites. The higher rate of return of White children is particularly surprising in view of the fact that Whites in comparison with Hispanics voluntarily seek placement for their children at disproportionately high rates.

A New York City Mayor's Task Force in 1980 reported that foster children receive 55 percent of the monies spent in foster care on child and family services. This is in contrast to the Southern region in New Jersey, which after reforming the foster care system spent only from 15 to 20 percent of the monies appropriated for children and family services. New York City had 24,000 children in care and New Jersey 7,545. New Jersey, nevertheless, provided various types of services each month to 45,000 children—the greatest numbers of which were able to be maintained at home and at a much lower cost than New York City was spending for much fewer children. It is evident that supports must be given to families at home. Only when it has been proven that it is impossible for the child to remain at home or is in danger should the child be placed. This does not, however, negate the value of substitute care under appropriate circumstances. Priority then must be given to work with the biological family for early return home or, if indicated, surrender of the child. When substitute care is necessary and in permanency planning endeavors our children must not be looked upon as "hard to place." Bilingual and bicultural personnel, outreach and subsidization of the adoption process and adoptions will mean many more Hispanic families enabled to parent.

It is unconscionable to place children because of parental short-term coping problems, which too often have resulted in perceiving the child as requiring adoption. Our children are more likely to be placed in foster care than Whites or Blacks for what are temporary coping problems. This does not mean not caring—in fact the Hispanic family initiates behavior reflecting interest more actively within the foster care process than other groups—as shown statistically. Nevertheless, we see Hispanic children remaining in care for significantly longer periods than Whites—15 months. It is shocking that minority exit rates are from 65-70 percent lower than White exit rates, with the greatest difference seen in the return home rate. Discrimination has no place in the child welfare system of New York City. Ethnic and religious sorting, with assumptions made frequently of all Puerto Ricans being Catholics, has resulted in minorities being serviced by the less effective agencies which has resulted in structural discrimination.

It is critical to continually assess the impact of all legislative activity and to hold accountable human service agencies for their delivery. The Child Welfare Reform Act represents a significant attempt in New York to eliminate many of the abuses present in the child welfare system. The legislation works toward a family and preventive focus, takes culture into account and importantly has monitoring provisions to insure permanency planning. The Act however, does not deal with a core issue—the functional manner in which services are structured—adoption, foster care, mental health,

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etc. It is unfortunately true that professionals have a vested interest in maintaining their jobs, program and agency. They tend to handle client problems from the perspective of their agency setting and professional discipline which too often works to the detriment of a child and his/her family. The South New Jersey experience restructuring services and eliminating the specific function specialization of agencies, along with the State's permanency planning training is apparently making significant changes. We in New York must look into different service patterns that will make it structurally possible to provide a comprehensive package of services—based on family need rather than agency function. The child welfare system in New York must, in a true sense, become a family and child welfare one. Family restitution rather than family substitution must become its operational philosophy.

Recommendations

■ Foundations, with the assistance of Corporate-Responsibility programs, must provide monies for an independent major research study and follow-up task force in the area of child welfare services. It is imperative to assess the impact of service structure on service outcome and to determine the best fit between service form, service outcome and service goal.It is a known axiom that all systems have vested interests in perpetuating themselves as systems. Organizations seek to maintain their staff, programs and type of service and may thereby limit a client's option to their agency's offering. The auspices under which a service is delivered and its area of specialization have been shown to be an unwarranted determinant in the shaping of a child's life and family's destiny. The Hispanic Research Center at Fordham University's study on *The Minority Foster Child: A Comparative Study of Hispanics, Black and White Children*, should either be replicated or built upon after study of its methodology, findings and recommendations.

■ A top level gubernatorial task force with legislative support and substantial Puerto Rican and minority representation should be convened to develop a master plan for the restructuring of the public and voluntary human services to make them culturally relevant, nondiscriminatory and reponsive to the needs of Hispanic children and families and all!

■ Government monies must be provided for intensive work with biological families immediately upon a child's entrance into care to insure a child's return to family—as the child's returning home in some communities, after 24 months duration in care is estimated to be possibly lower than 2 percent.

■ Corporations and foundations should provide monies for research into cultural differences in child rearing patterns and their implications for development.

■ There must be an expansion of bilingual, bicultural personnel at all levels of the child welfare system proportionate to the levels of Hispanic children and families that are clients of the system. Affirmative Action is critical!

■ Public/private sector funds must provide grants, scholarships, stipends and loans for expansion of the cadre of bilingual, bicultural personnel in the child welfare system.

■ Government monies must be expended, to whatever extent is necessary, to insure and expedite permanency adoption, once it is established that return to the biological family, for whatever the reasons, is no longer a viable alternative for the child. These efforts will mean extensive bilingual outreach, biculturally relevant campaigns and subsidized maintenance when required.

■ Government monies must be allocated for multiple interventive efforts that seek to maintain a child at home with biological family and to prevent his/her placement. Supports must include: income supplementation; day care; full weekend care; homemakers; babysitting outlets; concrete services; after school recreation programs; counselling and treatment ranging from budgeting advice to therapuetic milieus; parenting courses; and creative linkages with other families in mutual aid endeavors, etc. The aim must be to prevent the depletion of parental energies and enhance parental coping.

■ Corporations, foundations and government should provide monies for the development of model culturally responsive training programs for all personnel levels involved in the child and family welfare system—line staff, supervisors, administrators, top management, policymakers, boards, advisory committees and even legislators. These programs should be assessed for effectiveness in changing behavior and attitudes and for determining suitability for replication and ongoing Government funding.

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THE ELDERLY

As pointed out by New York City's Human Resources Administration, the Hispanic elderly have a poverty index which is double that of the overall senior citizen population. In addition, they have fewer financial resources than Whites or their counterparts.

Furthermore, the National Hispanic Council on the Aging points cut that the life span of Hispanic elders averages 14 to 18 years less than their typical aging American counterparts. They suffer poor health at an earlier age which has a serious negative impact on their ability to function and on their limited financial resources. The Hispanic elderly suffer the particular predicament of falling through the cracks of all public support systems whether Federal, State or City.

The elderly must be accorded the same rights and privileges as younger people in our society—which must translate, at minimum, into financial equity in terms of income, goods and services provided. The elderly have paid their dues and have a right to expect their investment to return final dividends. Income supports and services must insure a living standard that enables the elderly to meet their basic needs for a quality living standard.

The Puerto Rican/Hispanic elderly are a group that have yet to secure their entitlements in this Nation. They are a vulnerable population and have been characterized with other minority aged as persons in multiple jeopardy. They face the discrimination that all aged face in a youth oriented culture, as well as the discrimination that occurs as a consequence of minority status. In addition, many face an existence of poverty and deprivation. This status has meant an accruing of deficits throughout the years, financially, emotionally and biologically.

For example, Puerto Ricans, for decades, have experienced high unemployment and low paying jobs. Thus, savings and pensions have not accumulated to the degree to which they can provide the Puerto Rican elderly with an endowment which enables them to live out their remaining years with dignity and minimal worries.

Reliance solely on Social Security benefits and/or Supplementary Security Income "SSI" leaves our elderly with insufficient resources to meet the minimum needs for food, shelter, health care and clothing.

In developing public policies targeted to the Hispanic elderly, decision makers must carefully consider how their actions potentially impact upon the extended family. The needs of the Hispanic elderly must be recognized and not be obscured by faulty cultural considerations.

For example, policy makers must not expect that because Puerto Ricans possess an extended family system, that relatives are able to financially care for their aged relatives. The Puerto Rican family will provide emotional sustenance to their elderly but society must not place a financial strain on an already struggling unit. Policy makers, instead, must look for ways in which to strengthen the family in meeting its life's tasks. Family allowances should be paid for the provision of home and health care to the elderly.

Public policy decisions must consider biological realities and not contribute to discriminatory societal practices. The struggles of the Puerto Rican family have taken their biological toll. Informed sources have characterized the Puerto Rican/Hispanic at the chronological age of 48 as comparing biologically with a White at age 65. Minorities have lower life expectancies and more chronic debilitating diseases. Thus, for example, any decision to lengthen the age of retirement for Social Security benefits would serve to again exploit the Puerto Rican population, since those who would reach retirement age and collect their benefits are few indeed. It is useful to note that only 10 percent of all Puerto Ricans in New York City are 55 years old or older compared with 24.5 percent of the total population.

Health services for the elderly are critical to mitigate the physical damage which societal conditions have caused. The frail elderly must be protected and supports provided for their care. These should include services when necessary in all areas, as for example: at home medical attention, Hispanic meals on wheels and even exercise programs. Provision in housing must include features necessary for those with handicaps.

Housing for all elderly, without means, must be subsidized and different forms of living arrangements permitted, from living alone, or with family to group homes, etc.

The housing situation for the Puerto Rican elderly, who throughout their lives have been subject to discriminatory housing practices, is deplorable. For instance, in New York City where the Puerto Rican householder or spouse is 60 years or 65 years of age or over, housing conditions are more likely to be overcrowded than are similarly comprised households. In total, 5.8 percent of

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elderly Puerto Rican households are overcrowded as compared with 2.0 percent of the city's elderly households.

Elderly Puerto Ricans who are in good physical condition and wish to seek gainful employment require and must receive governmental protection from discriminatory practices stemming from their minority and elderly statuses. They must be provided access to full or part-time work and be perceived as competitive with those in the white community, when they are as or more experienced, qualified and capable. There are many who are unskilled, but certainly their many years of life and work experiences should be tapped and credited in the same ways that colleges are crediting the learning involved in living and the obtaining of survival skills.

Public and private sectors must provide employment for the elderly who have gained the right to gainful employment by their many years of contributions to the work force. Work programs must not continue to ignore their needs and rights. Innovative programs—at minimum—in the public sector, must utilize the knowledge acquired by the elderly. They have much to contribute in working with the young, elderly and infirm. It will be important to have bilingual campaigns to alert the elderly to the availability of such special programs.

Bilingual, bicultural outreach is imperative with the Puerto Rican elderly. The underutilization of services is customary for the Puerto Rican population. However, with the elderly, there are life and death differences. Numerous reasons abound for service underutilization. However, central to a comprehension of this phenomenon is an understanding of the cultural unresponsiveness of the delivery system.

Policy makers must understand the special importance of bilingual, bicultural personnel with this population. The Puerto Rican/Hispanic elderly has already acquired through the years, a set response to the providers of human and health services. Reaching out by personnel which the elderly perceive as trustworthy is critical. For true responsiveness, however, it will be essential that the elderly Hispanic be allowed input into policy, planning, organization and delivery of services to their own cohorts. The Hispanic community cannot allow the societal violation of its cultural value system. The Hispanic community must protect the "dignidad" of its elderly.

Finally, in order to properly meet the needs of and appropriately service Hispanic elders, baseline demographic data needed for policy development and program planning must be developed. Research in social gerontology focusing on the Hispanic elderly must also be encouraged. Research must also be performed to identify programs in the aging field and other disciplines which have attempted to address barriers to services to the Hispanic elderly and provide options to gain access to those services.

Recommendations

- Government monies must be provided to insure that the elderly have an adequate income to provide them with sufficient food, adequate clothing and housing, and minimal recreation. Comparable benefits must be made available in Puerto Rico.

- Bilingual, bicultural, and aged personnel, must be part of all programs serving the Hispanic elderly and they must have input into policy, planning, organization and service delivery.

- All programming addressing the needs of Hispanic elderly must utilize outreach and monies provided for its increased expense. In addition, all written materials should be translated into Spanish.

- A statewide effort must be made to translate into Spanish all written materials related to entitlements.

- Government must provide some form of family allowance to relatives who care for an elderly member—to strengthen that family and insure that the elderly not become a stress factor.

- Government must monitor discrimination in employment against the Hispanic elderly and provide public sector employment and incentives to private sector employers for hiring of the elderly.

- Corporations in affirmative action programs must provide employment to the elderly—allowing for part-time arrangements.

- Government must work with the private sector and provide incentives for the building of housing suitable to the needs of the elderly.

Foundations should provide funding for special recreational programming for the elderly.

- Supplementary Security Income "SSI" should be made available to those residing in or migrating to Puerto Rico.

- Government must undertake efficient data collection on the Hispanic elderly and ask their participation in analyzing service programs.

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SUBSTANCE / ALCOHOL ABUSE

Society must wage a multilevel war against substance/alcohol abuse.Government funding will require supplementation from corporations, foundations and individuals. Substance/alcohol abuse must be faced for the complex problem which it is, which includes, for example: the kids that sell drugs to other kids in school; the social drinking that translates into alcoholism in the work force; and the political, police, and international corruption that is tied to organized crime. We must be prepared to confront the many vested interests involved in its perpetuation. Priority must be placed on controlling drug traffic and all effort made towards its elimination.

Research must be undertaken and programs developed which, in effect, serve to immunize individuals to prevent their susceptibility to this societal disease. But above all, a national commitment must be made to attack this problem at its societal roots and alter the circumstances that create and foster the individual addiction of so many.

It is essential that it be acknowledged by all that the criminality of the drug profiteer is matched by the culpability of a nation which structures the conditions that creates populations at risk for substance/alcohol abuse.

There are many reasons for substance/alcohol abuse and many theories to analyze its causation. However it begins, it ends with a physiological dependency, personal and family difficulties and societal problems. Though substance/alcohol abuse cuts across cultures and classes, Puerto Ricans have to be concerned with the high degree to which alcoholism and drug addiction manifest themselves in our community. According to a report published in December 1984 by the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services, in the first nine months of 1984, the proportion of Hispanics exceeded the proportion of Blacks among heroin admissions to treatment—Hispanics represented 38 percent and Blacks 37 percent. The Puerto Rican community cannot accept simplistic explanations with classifications of oral personalities, character defects or addiction prone. The stress, strain and pain of living under poverty conditions take a psychic and physical toll and force many persons to seek escape outlets from the harsh realities of existence. Men who experience themselves as failures, unable to provide adequately for their families, may easily seek solace in a bottle or a fix. Many mothers at home with young children despairing over the lack of a future for their families may take to heavy drinking. Teenagers seeing no value in school for future employment and having no present job possibilities, considering the high rate of teenage unemployment, work themselves easily into drugs out of boredom, frustration and encouragement from their peer group. Experimentation may lead to addiction and then easily to criminality to support the habit. The impoverishment of their families and the societal deprivation of the Puerto Rican often create parental inability to control and secure respect from their children.

The degree of youth involvement in crime and in substance abuse is of major concern. It has been estimated that in New York City's criminal justice system, one fourth of all young men ranging in age from 16 to 18 arrested for crimes are Hispanic. At the state level we find him to be barely twenty years old. The problem of substance abuse, however, goes way beyond our youth. Approximately one half of all Hispanic prisoners in New York State, at the time of conviction, were drug abusers.

Again the paucity of data with the lack of uniformity in reporting makes it difficult to know with complete accuracy the extent of this social problem. Nevertheless, there is known to be a correlation between the disproportionate numbers of Puerto Ricans and Hispanics in prison and drug related crime. The depth of the problem remains unclear since we are not informed as to the type of usage or the composite nature of the criminal charges, which can range from possession for individual use to involvement with an organized crime syndicate.

The destructiveness of substance abuse perhaps has no better yardstick for measurement than an examination of mortality rates, which is considered to be a substantial social indicator differentiating societal groups. Findings from an exhaustive research study evidenced that drugs caused one out of every eleven deaths and cirrhosis associated with alcoholism resulted in one out of every ten deaths of Island born Puerto Ricans between the ages of 15 to 44.

The rehabilitation of the addicted must be perceived as the societal responsibility which it is. The greater society must assist them in reclaiming their lives, before there is no life left to claim. To do less is to support a form of genocide of the Puerto Rican population and to insure that those in the community that remain alive exist in a state of siege. The ghetto is plagued by crime and an inordinately high number of homicides. The victims of Hispanic addicts' crimes are very often other

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Hispanics. Rehabilitation involves much more than psychotherapeutic intervention. The provision of social supports to the addict and family is critical. Societal assumption of obligation must begin, however, much earlier with allowing people opportunities and options in living. Also educational activities and campaigns on all fronts are simply not enough. Prevention must mean there is no need created by societal conditions for escapism and that our youth is enabled to feel that the future is truly theirs and theirs to control.

Recommendations

- Bilingual educational campaigns must be conducted by schools, churches, recreation centers, work places, etc., to inform Hispanics of all ages of the development, manifestations and consequences of substance/alcohol abuse. Stress will be placed on helping parents to quickly note early symptoms in their children. Links to assistance programs must be provided which would include the development of hot lines.

- Corporations and unions must institute employee assistance programs that provide counselling in relation to substance/alcohol abuse—which has an effect upon employee's work functioning. The employee must be assured that seeking or accepting help will not be detrimental to his/her work status and the utilization of this program must be optional.

- The President should convene a national task force to examine the effects of the communications media on the development and perpetuation of drug abuse. It will seek to determine the limits of censorship and attempt to arrive at the media's self regulation—especially as it affects society's youth. There would be a broad representation including: addicts, media representatives, law enforcement officials, parents, attorneys, and Federal Communication Commission representatives.

- Legislation must be enacted which, within constitutional constraints, prohibits the communication's media stereotyping of minorities and presents minority concerns in responsible reporting and portrayal.

- Through combined Congressional and Presidential action, an agency must be assigned the responsibility to become the centralized coordinating body for all federal and state activity in relation to organized crime and drug traffic. Without such a mechanism for consolidation and accountability—which would be reflective of true societal commitment to work against vested interests—we will not have the means to wage a war that has any chance of curbing drug traffic.

- Government and corporate monies must be provided for comprehensive rehabilitation programs which would include a continuum of care ranging from counselling to residential and halfway houses. These programs must have as their goal the reintegration of the addict into society at-large and importantly provide skills which would enable the individual to secure a job. Central to this strategy is maintaining/expanding services provided by Puerto Rican/Hispanic substance/alcohol abuse programs.

- Government monies must be made available to provide societal supports to the addict's family in coping with the familial disruptions caused by addiction. These must range from counselling to income supplementation.

- Foundations/government must provide monies for demonstration projects using different treatment methodologies which would be evaluated for effectiveness. Consideration will be given to the type of addiction, personality structure, familial environment and socioeconomic variables. Government monies must be made available for support of programs with high success rates. Foundation monies should support an extensive research project which would analyze, in-depth, the reasons for involvement of and types of involvement of Hispanics in drugs/alcohol abuse. The study would assess causation and should attempt to pinpoint where and in what form intervention could have prevented the addiction.

- Public/private sector monies should support research to identify the sources of strengths in families which enable them to withstand the impact of external systems and cope successfully under tremendous stress.

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Equity under the law for all communities and its members—constitutionally guaranteed—must become a reality. The criminal justice system, above all, in its practices must be exemplary as its very role is condemnation of those who violate societal prescriptions. When this System itself makes a travesty of justice and shows contempt in its functioning for the law, it only serves to reinforce, perpetuate and even initiate the criminality of those who are forced into its presence and who may experience the inequities and brutalities of its operations.

It is of great concern that retribution—fitting the punishment to the severity of the crime—remains the philosophy underpinning this institution—despite the general recognition that retribution is not an effective deterrent. Worse yet, retribution shows a class and ethnic differential. It is common knowledge, which many researchers have demonstrated, that those most severely impacted by the system are the underprivileged, the poor, the young and ethnic/racial minorities. The Correctional Association issued a report showing that Puerto Ricans though making up only 5.62 percent of the total New York State population represent 19 percent of the total prison population. Given the anticipated national growth of the Hispanic population by the year 2000 the numbers of Hispanics in prison promises to be alarming.

Findings show institutional discriminatory factors entering into the involvement of the Hispanic community with the criminal justice system. We take note that in the correctional system the Puerto Rican/Hispanic population is increasing at a faster rate than any other ethnic/racial group. This is reflected in a disproportionately high new commitment rate. There is, therefore, a specific Hispanic experience which is different from White America's—with incarceration a more frequent outcome for similar charges and probation/parole an unlikely disposition, and when granted of longer duration.

The Puerto Rican community is sophisticated enough to realize that networking enables those with political and economic influence to extract special concessions from the system. Also, that there are those who can afford the best legal representation to challenge and manipulate the system in ways not available to those with limited means. Our community is poor and lacks such recourse. Our concern however, extends way beyond those individuals with "pull" and money—to the collective criminal justice system's response to the Hispanic community.

For many Americans, as well as the personnel of the criminal justice system, the view of the Puerto Rican and Hispanic comes from the sensationalism of the mass media—which never deals with the daily struggles of the Hispanic who works hard at survival. For too many, the Hispanic becomes stereotyped as a criminal—inherently so. Also there are those who have been brought up to fear Hispanics. Class and ethnic factors have fostered a social distance between Hispanics and many Whites—never allowing for the obtaining and incorporation of new evidence that belies the stereotype.

The criminal justice system has numerous discretionary points for official decision making—dealing with destiny shaping determinations. These include: to arrest or not; to prosecute or not; to adjudicate guilty or innocent; to determine what kind of disposition; and to decide on the severity of the sentence. Stereotyping, the predispositon to think negatively about a community and its members, consciously or unconsciously, may easily come into play at these times—resulting in subjective judgments rather than objective evaluations and injustice for the Hispanic client. It is therefore essential that there be sensitivity training on an ongoing basis to help officers of the court become aware of their perception of Hispanic clients and to supply them with knowledge on Hispanic cultures, values and life styles. Criminal justice personnel must be enabled to become culturally responsive for effective and bias free communication and determinations.

There is a neccessity for outside assessment and intervention by advocacy groups of all kinds to keep the criminal justice system in balance. This is a system ripe for abuse; the client is powerless and often unable to adequately defend his/her rights, for he/she has been stripped of them. In addition, there is often a lack of training (not only in cultural awareness) and inadequate supervision that permeates the system in general. The Citizens Committee for Children, in a study completed November, 1982, involving 22,000 youths, many of whom were Hispanic, found the probationary services to be "totally inadequate for the needs of children before the Family Court," finding training and supervision of probation officers virtually nonexistent.

Rehabilitation, not "criminalization," must become operationalized into the criminal justice system. Rehabilitation today is, at best, a fantasy of those who would

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wish to see changes made to insure that recidivism should not be a guaranteed system's outcome and that Hispanic youth, especially while imprisoned, should not be driven to becoming solidly embedded into the subculture of crime.

Puerto Rican and other Hispanic cultures have a strong family orientation with adherence to values of loyalty and honor. The prison environment can be expected to be perceived by many Hispanics as totally foreign with its different codes of communication, values and expectations. They feel alienated from the representatives of the law from whom they feel they need protection, and they also fear other inmates. Ethnic ties are sought; they bind and provide security against the common enemy—society. They are relieved to find a ready incorporation into a Hispanic peer group which supplies a family support system and only requires of them the familiar demands of loyalty and following of its rules. This mitigates against feelings of societal and possible familial rejection for having blemished the family's name and honor through being labeled a deviant.

The sensitizing and responsiveness of personnel to the needs of Hispanic inmates will work toward lessening the need to seek the protection of a Hispanic peer group—which can become a closed system with criminal values. Of greater significance will be the staffing with bilingual, bicultural personnel with a commitment to the rehabilitation of the convicted. Experienced, caring Hispanic personnel can serve as role models for the possibility of a life other than one of crime. The hiring of bilingual, bicultural personnel in the criminal justice system is, therefore, a critical need.

Hispanic personnel are also essential as connecting links to families who, because of their own experience with "American" institutions, may avoid contact with the imprisoned. Many families will require assistance to become or remain support systems for the convicted. Hispanic criminal justice systems' officers ability to understand the culture, life styles and values of Hispanics and to communicate this knowledge—along with their mutual ethnic identification with family members—may be possibly the only way to reach this family, who may be "turned off" to the system and possibly to the inmate as well.

The benefit of bilingual, bicultural personnel goes further than a working relationship but also is critical to an accurate assessment. Without being attuned to culture it is possible to misinterpret behavior and the nuances of feelings. The judicial system is lessening somewhat its emphasis on the degree of severity of the crime and is increasing its focus on the motivation for the crime. The pathology is being looked at not only in terms of the psychology or pathology of the individual but contributing social forces are increasingly being considered as well in decision making. With the changes in the rules of evidence psycho-social studies become of greater importance then ever and require a sophistication that goes well beyond "book learning" about people and require an empathic appreciation. The case by case analysis that can be provided by Hispanic personnel should serve to shed light on the important issue of the large numbers of Hispanics involved in a life of crime.

Formal research is essential in demonstrating to society the reasons for Hispanic crime. We are certain that research findings will show conclusively that structural deficits in the operations of society and in the criminal justice system account for the disproportionate number of Hispanics being convicted on drug charges and violence as well as the large numbers of youths imprisoned.

Though we acknowledge fully that there are psychological factors that require understanding in any individual's violation of societal norms we contend that an enlightened perspective must broaden the scope of investigation in the search for causation to sociological determinants. It will be necessary to go beyond the blaming of the victim to a recognition that deviance from a sociological perspective can be viewed as symptomatic of the lack of fit between culturally prescribed aspirations and the opportunity structure.

Drug trafficking under such societal circumstances provides the opportunity structure instead of the mainstream. This form of activity becomes the only way that many have for obtaining the "big bucks" that our materialistic society worships. Otherwise, the most that certain individuals could hope for—if lucky—is a minimum wage job. For some Hispanic groups drugs are shipped from their country of origin and with little by way of societal options it is easy to accept moving into this subculture. To break the hold of this subculture is imperative but it can not be achieved without the substitution of a viable income alterative.

There are theoreticians who claim that violence is an acceptable cultural response of the Hispanic in situations involving honor. Homicide is an extreme form of violence and the extent to which it occurs in the Hispanic population makes this too simplistic an analysis. It avoids looking at the rage that must be generated by their life circumstances waiting for an outlet for discharge.

If we are to indict the Hispanic we must first indict society, a larger social system, which furnishes the conditions of existence for the Hispanic—a smaller and vulnerable social system—making for the extreme frustration, impotency and hopelessness that occurs

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vulnerable social system—making for the extreme frustration, impotency and hopelessness that occurs when that which should be possible for all citizens becomes impossible for some.

Recommendations

■ A nonpartisan National Presidential Commission on Criminal Justice must be appointed and include substantial representation of Puerto Ricans and other minorities, who are disproportionately represented in the system as prisoners. The Commission would be charged with a broad and in-depth examination of the philosophy and current operations of the system. An important investigatory focus would be the differential treatment of minorities and recidivism. The Commission should have broad investigative powers and be well funded to carry on its task to map out a plan for reform of an unjust system. Similiar commissions should be appointed by the New York State Governor and the Mayor of New York City.

■ Legislation must be passed which mandates the establishment of a Centralized Federal Information Bureau for the Criminal Justice System in total and has enforcement mechanisms in place for collection of the required data. It will be charged with the establishment of a uniform reporting system for compilation of statistical data from all levels of Government: Federal, State, City, County, etc. Information is to be obtained on the variables: ethnicity/race, age, sex, education, occupation, income, etc., as related especially to charges and disposition. Comparisons between groups are to be constantly monitored through ongoing cross tabulations. The Bureau is to be charged with identifying organizations and individuals requiring such data and disseminating the material obtained to these parties—serving in effect—as advocates for the utilization of the data. The information is to be made public and made easily accessible to research and advocacy groups.

■ Monies must be provided by Government and Foundations for research into the differential treatment of offenders in the criminal justice system of New York State. The variables to be examined should include: an ethnic/racial breakdown into the various categories of personnel; structural elaments that may be working as impediments to the obtaining of equity for certain groups such as bail and probation provisions; characteristics of the accused providing in-depth sociological and psychological profiles; detailed specification of charges, including degree of severity, and elaboration on case disposition. The research should have as its focus an action outcome —recommendations for implementation of strategies to insure equality of treatment.

■ Government funding must be provided for the provision of cultural responsiveness training to all personnel of the Criminal Justice System. These must be ongoing programs and continually assessed for effectiveness.

■ Corporations and foundations should provide funds for development of model rehabilitation programs, which are to be assessed for effectiveness and replication value for continuing Government funding. Special attention should be paid to the effectiveness of the model with what type of individual.

■ Legislation must be passed that would mandate and create mechanisms for the development of a Rehabilitation Plan for each prisoner.

■ The Government should provide funds for development of the programs that would permit the rehabilitation plan to become a reality.

■ Government and industry must work cooperatively to establish training and educational programs in prison and work release programs that truly develop or maintain marketable skills.

■ Corporations must be prepared to hire convicts and provide supports for the adjustments that must be made in a non-prison environment.

■ The Government must provide monies for skilled and culturally responsive counselling to prisoners and their families to insure that families will be enabled to function throughout as support systems and will be able upon the prisoner's release to assist with reintegration into family and society.

■ A commitment must be made to hire Puerto Rican and Hispanic personnel at all levels of the criminal justice system including policy and decision making positions.

■ The present Civilian Review Board in New York City which investigates civilian complaints against the police, must maintain a level of minority representation proportionately equal to New York's racial/ethnic communities. An adequate level of staffing is a priority.

■ Monies must be provided jointly by Government and foundations for empowering community review boards to monitor and demand proper accountability from all facets of the criminal justice system for insuring of due process. This is to be separate from the present Civilian Review Board's monitoring of its own personnel.

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■ Government, corporate and foundation monies must be provided for action research that would identify: youths at special risk for criminal behavior; the interventions that must be made to lessen the risk; and the supports that are necessary to strengthen families to establish controls for their youth. The funding is to be utilized for legislation and program development.

■ Through Congressional and Presidential action an agency must be assigned the responsibility to operate as the centralized coordinating body for all Federal and State activity in relation to organized crime and drug traffic. Without such a mechanism for consolidation and accountability which is reflective of a true societal commitment to work against vested interests, we will not have the means to wage a war that has any chance of curbing drug traffic.

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WE THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE

It is the right and obligation of the Puerto Rican community to secure decision making input into the policy and programmatic decisions affecting their lives. We the Puerto Rican people must make certain that maximum feasible participation becomes a reality that goes beyond the rhetoric of politicians, human service providers and affirmative action officers. Government action regulates the lives of all in every sphere of life. The activities of the profit making sector shape economic life. Human service providers in poor communities affect the very ability to meet basic needs.

The Puerto Rican community is especially dependent on and vulnerable to the workings of the public social welfare delivery system. Its members must be accorded the same prerogatives and safeguards as any consumers of services who are in a position to purchase them. The ultimate goal, however, of the Puerto Rican community is to enter the mainstream of society and to be able to produce/sell, and buy/choose the suppliers of its services and goods.

We must face the perception of our struggles as basically ours alone in terms specifically of our community's needs. There are many conflicting demands made on the various special sectors. To obtain concessions, political and economic power is required. We can make gains through collaborative efforts in coalitions where vested interests converge but we must remember that they are vested interests and are protecting of themselves. It is also essential to be aware that civil rights gains are necessary to achieve but will only become substantive, not through the creation of structure, but through the monitoring of their operations and outcomes.

The Puerto Rican community, if it is to progress, cannot afford to allow others or itself to go about "business as usual." The Puerto Rican community must organize itself into a unified whole. Factionalism has no place before the public view. Factionalism will continue to limit our ability to organize and mobilize as one force and will give others ammunition with which to destroy our very own institutions. We should not count on others to do for us what we must do for ourselves if it is to get done. Though others may assist us they must not be allowed to define our priorities and shape our solutions which is an outcome of disunity.

"Business as usual" has meant primarily looking to the human services to "bandaid" our wounds. Though we have successfully developed our own service institutions and have great expertise in this area, by now we must see clearly that residual programs will never serve to extricate us from our impoverished state. We must take a hard look at our own service programs to assure that the investment in them justifies their present return. The Puerto Rican community cannot afford our own vested interest groups. We must responsibly evaluate the best ways in which to deliver services and consider where the dollars would do the Puerto Rican community the most good. In addition, we must not be maneuvered into simply "following the buck" and must establish ourselves in positions where we make determinations as to the areas where resources are to be allocated.

There can be no question that political power is imperative in allowing us to set and obtain our priorities. We are beginning to make gains politically, but it is far from enough. If it is truly to be the age of the Hispanic, it will require bringing out the vote. This will mean convincing the electorate that their vote will count in making changes that will insure them health care, decent housing, safe neighborhoods, good schools—but above all better paying jobs with a future. The Puerto Rican community must take care that when speaking of Hispanic power it does not permit its interests to be subsumed under other Hispanics' issues and needs.

It is critical that we maintain our Puerto Rican identity in all efforts at community and economic development—which must now be a number one priority. Our community must be helped to reaffirm itself as Puerto Rican. Our youth, in particular, require assistance in identifying positively with community—to mitigate against the societal influence that is working to destroy our sense of worth. It is only as we credit who we are that we will be able to forge ahead and establish the political and economic base which will enable us to improve the quality of our life.

As much of the leadership of the Puerto Rican community is in the nonprofit sector, it will be up to this sector to spearhead the mobilization and unification of all sectors for a comprehensive economic development effort. The human services have traditionally worked collaboratively with politicians and educators but now must seek increased linkages with the profit making sectors in the Puerto Rican and Hispanic communities. These alliances must become formalized and economic structures created to foster our economic betterment in strategic action planning.

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The Puerto Rican human services in themselves are big business, especially if one thinks of the combined agency budgets. This sector is in a position to assist Hispanic businesses through purchases of their goods and services. Their profits will mean more jobs for Puerto Ricans. The human services are also in a position to provide the Hispanic private sector certain forms of technical assistance. Knowledge of obtaining government monies and in working this system is important in enabling our business sector to obtain government's support of business enterprises. The business sector in turn has the important "know how" of making money in business endeavors. Dialogue is essential to seek ways to broaden the economic base of all Puerto Ricans in all sectors.

The human services will also have to address the issue of whether to enter into the profit sector domain. Though economic development is a community priority we must cope in the here and now with the harsh realities of our existence which necessitate personal social services and income maintenance. Our institutions must be quality ones and service models. We can not afford to be less or do less. Strategic decisions will have to be made by the not-for-profit sector as to the manner in which it will balance and utilize its resources to insure its service programs. Funding cuts are having drastic effects on our institutions. Many community based organizations are no longer even in existence. Philosophically the human services may wish to reaffirm the entitlement of all citizens and pressure government to obtain what is rightfully ours; however, we may have to come to the realization that ultimately only through the development of a profit making arm will nonprofits be enabled to pay for high caliber service programs.

Our ultimate goal, however, is not to build bigger and better social welfare institutions but to minimize our need for social welfare programming through economic improvement. A better quality life is the Puerto Rican entitlement and our American heritage.

It is the hope of the Association of Puerto Rican Executive Directors (APRED), that this Call to Action is a first step in the economic, political and institutional empowerment of New York's Puerto Rican/Hispanic communities.

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